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Is There an Opportunity in Forestry?

By ALLEN W. GOODSPEED

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ONE of the most pleasant aspects of teaching is the opportunity afforded for association with young men receiving formal instruction in their chosen profession. Many of these men go through the greater part of their college career on the strength of their general interest in forestry and only as they approach graduation do they make a serious attempt to appraise the possibilities of the field for which they have been so busily preparing themselves. When this task has finally been accomplished the results are too often distasteful; forestry is filled up, the opportunities once present are gone, and they have spent four years of their lives pursuing a mirage. The reaction is severe and is often made worse by consultation with older individuals who lack the vision necessary to see the future possibilities in forestry. While a short article cannot hope to thoroughly survey the field of forestry it does seem possible to point out some of the brighter points on the horizon in the hope that a fresh viewpoint and angle of attack will encourage those whose immediate future path does not seem any too clear.

Close inspection shows, in fact, forestry is in a lively state of development in this country. All phases from the initial utilization of virgin resources to a relatively high standard of sustained yield management can be found. Furthermore, examples of sustained yield management can be found on private lands, operated without the benefit of special subsidies or other inducements which would nullify their value as an argument that forestry will work.

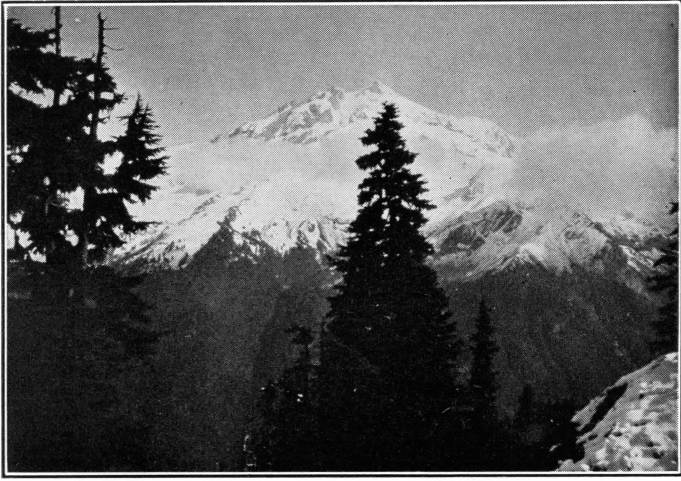
BEFORE considering some of these hopeful aspects of forestry let us briefly review the development of forestry to date in this country. Large scale lumbering started in the Northeast. By the middle of the 19th century Maine had passed its peak and the center of operations then shifted to New York, then on to the Lake States, to the South, and is now active in the West. Because of this fact we do not find an equal development in forestry, or of the opportunities for sustained yield for-

estry, in all parts of the country. Chronologically the East is considerably older than the West. For this reason we may logically look to the East for present day examples of advanced practices, while the West presents the chance to study modern methods of utilizing virgin forests. Thus examples of any phase of forestry from initial utilization to advanced sustained yield management are to be found within the boundaries of the United States.

While the New England region has only 5½% of our commercial forest land area of 495 million acres it is an especially good locality for examples of sustained yield management. In view of its good growing conditions, heavy population, well developed means of transportation, and nearness to market it would seem that sustained yield forestry should get a start here if anywhere. Let us see just what the situation is.

ALL OF THE New England States and New York have State Forestry Organizations. One of the soundest programs is being carried out by the State of Connecticut which for a number of years has been steadily enlarging its State Forest area and organizing its forests for sustained yield management. Timber sales have been made as opportunities arose and the stage is set for a longtime period of development along lines of sound forestry practice. Other New England States have not progressed as far, but all have taken steps to insure protection against fire and to keep forest areas permanently productive.

Demonstration forests are well represented in this region. On such areas practices are worked out and as they are proved worthwhile they are being adopted by private owners. As early as 1907 the Yale School of Forestry secured the use of the lands of the New Haven Water Company for the purpose of setting up a demonstration and research forest. Today this is one of the most advanced forests of its kind in the country. In addition, this school maintains two other demonstration forests in the region, one at Keene, New Hampshire and one at Union, Connecticut. Harvard University has long had a demonstration forest at Petersham, Mass. and for many years Bates College maintained a forest at Alfred, Maine. Recently this latter forest has been largely taken over by the Northeastern Forest Experiment Station, which also has established the Bartlett and the Gale River experimental forests on the White Mountain National Forest in New Hampshire. On all these forests and on others not mentioned all phases of forestry



in the region are actively investigated and the results made available to the public. It is impossible to estimate the influence the work done on these demonstration forests has had on private forest practices, but the most important point from our viewpoint is the fact that the results are being used and are making possible the private practice of forestry and with it new opportunities for foresters.

Among the large private owners of forestry property in the Northeast the Finch, Pruyn & Co. of Glens Falls, New York is outstanding, and suggests the possibilities of sustained yield in connection with the pulp and paper industry. Since 1911 they have employed a forester, added to their forest holdings, and are now in a position to meet the demands of their mill from their own forest area and on a basis of continuous production. Many a young forester has received his first practical woods experience in the employment of this company. Other companies, such as the Great Northern Paper Company, own considerable areas of forest land, employ foresters in their operations departments, and while not operating under formal management plans are protecting their areas, providing for reproduction, and gradually bringing their operations into line with the productive capacities of the areas on which they operate. It is a point in favor of the soundness of the sustained yield conception that these companies are approaching the threshold of continuous operation in the course of normal business development and without coercion by the Public.

ANOTHER interesting development in the Northeast is the establishment of forestry cooperatives. Of especial interest to farmers and other owners of relatively small areas, these organizations offer such persons a chance to participate in the advantages of sustained yield management and attempt to insure to them fair prices for their forest products, something they have not always received when on their own. The individual's position is strengthened as a member of such an organization. While he himself may not be able to operate on a sustained annual yield basis the central agency, taking his products one year and those of some other member the next, is able to offer to the consumer a continuous supply of forest products, thus tending towards stability and maximum prices. Furthermore, the cooperative usually contemplates eventually undertaking manufacture in order to maintain a high standard of quality and to secure to its members and the local community the benefits and profits of the manufacturing industries.

Two cooperative projects of particular interest are already established in the Northeast. One is at Cooperstown, New York and was set up as a result of the efforts of the New York State College of Forestry and the Northeastern Forest Experiment Station. Here the problems of marketing and utilization are being attacked, and management plans are being made for the properties involved. Established in 1935 the project aims at community stability and the maximum income from forest lands. The progress of this project will be well worth watching as it will undoubtedly be widely copied if it works out successfully.

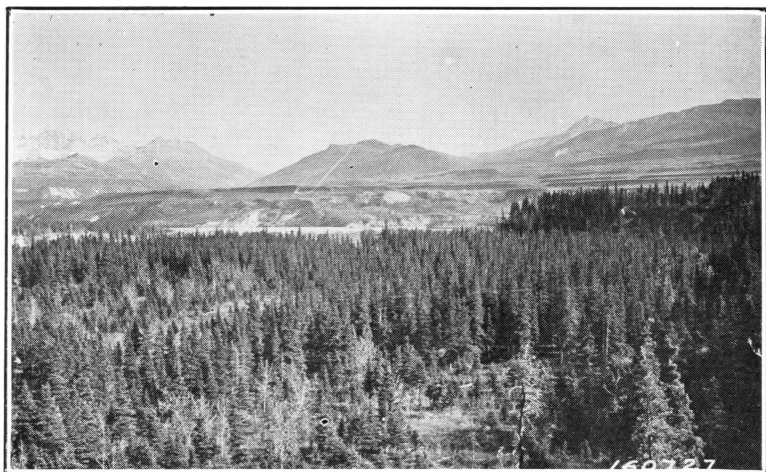
At Groveton, New Hampshire another cooperative has been in existence for several years. With about 500 members it has so far been chiefly concerned with the marketing problems of its members. As many believe that the success of forestry is contingent on the satisfactory development of utilization this effort, too, is well worth observation.

IN A RECENT article in "American Forests"⁽¹⁾ N. C. Brown estimates that there are 1500 community forests with an area of some 3,000,000 acres in the United States. 927 of these are in the States of New York, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, and Maine. 579 in New York alone. Many of these have

⁽¹⁾"Community Forests Come of Age," N. C. Brown in *American Forests*, Jan. 1939, page 16.

been established for a long time and have amply demonstrated their value, and their numbers are growing rather than decreasing. Surely this is a hopeful sign for forestry. Unhampered by excessive local taxation such forests offer forestry a chance to prove itself and may well serve as incentives to the private owner, particularly if the tax situation grows more favorable.

In addition to the forests already mentioned there are a number of smaller private forests in New England. Owned by individuals, or small groups of individuals, these forests are in all stages of development. Some are already operating on a sustained yield basis and others can do so when their owners become fully convinced of the practicability of forestry, and when the dangers of fire, insects, disease, and excessive taxation are brought under control. Many of these forests are not primarily owned for wood producing purposes, but for some other reason such as recreation, protection, fish and game, or merely as part of an estate. Sustained yield forestry fits in well as a secondary objective on properties of this kind, in fact it is rather favored as the overhead costs of maintaining the tract can only partially be charged to the forest enterprise. In this day when the multiple use character of land utilization is widely accepted no clear thinking forester would discount the value of such forests merely because productive forestry



was not the dominant objective. Real opportunities are open to the aggressive individual in developing and managing tracts of this sort.

CASTING our eyes elsewhere in the East the South immediately claims our attention. With 39% of our commercial land area, with valuable hardwoods and softwoods, with unsurpassed growing conditions, this is undoubtedly the most promising region in the country. Encouraged by the example of a few far seeing companies there has been a distinct trend towards sustained yield management in recent years. At the present time a number of companies are either operating on a sustained yield basis or taking the first steps leading to such operation. Much can be expected of this region in the future.

Besides the forestry activities already mentioned we have our United States Forest Service. To dismiss an organization as sound and as large as this as a source of employment with the argument that it is full up is the worst kind of folly. Replacements will always be needed and if some of these are made from other sources than the forest schools a hole is created in the organization supplying the Forest Service into which the young forester can step. No real loss of opportunities has been created by the expanded Federal activities of recent years; rather, new avenues of employment have been opened up. Thus the C.C.C. and the Soil Conservation Service present chances to the young forester that were not even in existence a few years ago. The same thing can be said of the T.V.A. and other similar governmental activities.

IN CLOSING may I suggest that where we make our mistake in appraising the opportunities in forestry is in comparing conditions today with those existing during the first thirty years of this century. During this period any man who could pass the Civil Service examination was assured of a position in our Federal system. This was a natural result of the demand for trained men in a rapidly expanding organization. There was a place for everyone, good, fair, or poor and this created an impression that an education in forestry was a guarantee of a position, a condition existing in no other profession. This era has passed forever and we will save ourselves a lot of needless grief by recognizing the fact at the start. Actually plenty of opportunities in forestry exist today for the right

men. The rub comes in the fact that the competition is siffer and the best plums in the basket will go to the men with ambition and vision, particularly those who can see a possibility and are willing to grow and develop with it. Such men will not only go far in the profession but will create new opportunities for other young foresters.



Woodcraft

THERE was an old trapper named Cook,
Who knew the North Woods like a book,
He knew that black bass
Never sought the tall grass
And that woodchucks won't snap at a hook.

He knew that a quail wouldn't quail,
When a rabbit was crossing its trail,
He knew why gnats sting,
And why doodle-bugs sing,
Which is more than they'll teach you at Yale.

—*The California Lumber Merchant*